



The

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 2014

Dear Residents and Stakeholders:

Good is just not enough. In everything we do, my motto is always to go from good to GREAT. Right now, under my administration's efforts, East Orange is poised for greatness. The City is home to one of the world's most-coveted resources — an easy and accessible mass transportation system. Currently, we are working with developers, finance experts and NJ Transit to help us maximize the use of this asset and make it profitable for our city. When I took office, I vowed to turn around years of stalled progress and return to East Orange a sense of urgency for renewal and redevelopment. Over the past 10 months, we have formed strategic partnerships with key stakeholders throughout the region to bring creativity and economic vitality back to East Orange.

This past October, I was one of eight mayors to attend the 2014 Mayor's Institute on City Design at Syracuse University. During the two-day session, I had candid dialogue with renowned architects and planners, as well as other mayors facing citywide problems like economic decline, infrastructural deterioration and a lack of redevelopment. Despite our similarities, East Orange stood out among the other seven cities. Within our densely-populated 3.9 square miles, we were the only urban city fortunate to have two train stations located within one mile of each other. The fact that these train stations provide approximately 2,000 daily commuters with direct service to New York City means that East Orange has the potential for massive sustainable growth.

Capitalizing on our state designation as a Transit Village, our redevelopment plans include reconfiguration of Brick Church Plaza into more mixed-used, transit-oriented development, which may include a larger ShopRite, additional retail stores, upscale residential living, and a parking garage for commuters, residents and retail customers. We also plan to transform Lower Main Street into an arts and entertainment district that will showcase the city's distinctive culture and cuisine. There are local organizations and artists who are more than eager to use the arts as a tool for building our community. We are engaged with them to reconstruct the cultural landscape of East Orange.

Development of portions of Sussex Avenue had been stagnant for almost 10 years due to ongoing litigation between the city and the East Orange Housing Authority. My administration has successfully resolved the matter and is now able to move forward with redevelopment in that vacant and blighted area, which was formerly home to the Arcadian Gardens Public Housing Complex and the Kuzuri-Kijiji Housing Development. The recent launch of the Sussex Avenue Planet Fitness, the city's first nationally-franchised fitness center, is a perfect match for our recruitment of other successful enterprises that will rebuild this area and enhance the overall quality of life for residents in East Orange.

More than \$100 million of private capital is being invested in our city. Other redevelopments are the rehabilitation of a 16-unit apartment building at 39 N. Burnett Street, the reinvention of an office building into an upscale residential building at 100 Halsted Street, the \$82 million construction of a complex of luxury residential lofts and apartments known as "Parkway Lofts" along the Garden State Parkway, the \$3.5 million construction of a residential building at 111 Glenwood Avenue, and \$12.6 million for the planned 103 market rate residential units at 125 S. Harrison Street. The city's goal to become an urban center of excellence is within our reach. Together, we will continue to work to make East Orange a great place to live, work and play.

Mayor Lester E. Taylor III